

I'TIKAAF

I'tikaaf in Arabic means staying, and the word may be applied to a long period of time or a short one; there is no report in Sharī'ah that defines it as being a specific length of time.

I'TIKAAF IS NAAFIL WORSHIP

I'tikaaf is prescribed in Islam and it is an act of worship that draws one closer to Allah. I'tikaaf is Nawafil acts of worship.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

“INDEED, IN THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH (MUHAMMAD) YOU HAVE A GOOD EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW FOR HIM WHO HOPES FOR (THE MEETING WITH) ALLAH AND THE LAST DAY, AND REMEMBERS ALLAH MUCH”
(Surah Al Ahzab 33:21)

THIS VERSE REPRESENTS A MAJOR PRINCIPLE: THAT WE SHOULD FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH (صلی اللہ علیہ و سلم) IN WORD AND DEED IN ALL SITUATIONS.

(Ibn Katheer, Vol 3, Page 756)

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says in a Hadeeth Al-Qudsi,

“MY SERVANT DRAWS NOT NEAR TO ME WITH ANYTHING MORE LOVED BY ME THAN THE RELIGIOUS DUTIES I HAVE ENJOINED UPON HIM, AND MY SERVANT CONTINUES TO DRAW NEAR TO ME WITH SUPEREROGATORY WORKS SO THAT I SHALL LOVE HIM. WHEN I LOVE HIM, I AM HIS HEARING WITH WHICH HE HEARS, HIS SEEING WITH WHICH HE SEES, HIS HAND WITH WHICH HE STRIKES AND HIS FOOT WITH WHICH HE WALKS. WERE HE TO ASK [SOMETHING] OF ME, I WOULD SURELY GIVE IT TO HIM, AND WERE HE TO ASK ME FOR REFUGE, I WOULD SURELY GRANT HIM IT.”

(Saheeh Bukharee 6502)

LENGTH OF TIME FOR I'TIKAAF

THE MAJORITY OF SCHOLARS ARE OF THE VIEW THAT THE MINIMUM LENGTH OF TIME FOR I'TIKAAF IS A MOMENT. THIS IS THE VIEW OF ABU HANEEFAH AND AHMAD.

(Al Durr Al Mukhtar, Vol 1, Page 445; Al Majmoo, Vol 6, Page 489 & Al Insaaf, Vol 7, Page 566)

Umar Ibn Al Khattab (رضي الله عنه) said:

“O MESSENGER OF ALLAH, DURING THE JAAHILIYYAH I VOWED TO OBSERVE I'TIKAAF FOR ONE NIGHT IN AL-MASJID AL-HARAAM.”

He (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said:

“FULFILL YOUR VOW.”

(Saheeh Bukharee 6697)

Narrated by Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (رضي الله عنه) that,

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (صلى الله عليه و سلم) USED TO OBSERVE I'TIKAAF DURING THE LAST TEN DAYS OF RAMADAN, BUT HE TRAVELED ONE YEAR AND DID NOT OBSERVE I'TIKAAF, SO THE FOLLOWING YEAR HE OBSERVED I'TIKAAF FOR TWENTY DAYS.

(Fath Al Bari, An Nasa'i & Abu Dawud. Classed as Saheeh by Ibn Hibban and others)

TIME OF I'TIKAAF

Yahya Ibn Sharaf An Nawawi (رحمه الله) said:

THE BEST I'TIKAAF IS THAT WHICH IS ACCCOMPANIED BY FASTING, AND THE BEST OF THAT IS IN RAMADAN, AND THE BEST OF THAT IS THE LAST TEN DAYS.

(Al Majmoo, Vol 6, Page 501)

I'TIKAAF SHOULD BE START AFTER FAJR PRAYER

Narrated by Ayesha (رضي الله عنها) that,

“WHEN THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (صلى الله عليه و سلم) WANTED TO OBSERVE I'TIKAAF, HE WOULD PRAY FAJR THEN ENTER HIS PLACE OF I'TIKAAF.”

(Bukharee 2041 & Muslim 1173)

NOTHING WRONG TO GO OUT FOR NEEDS WHILE ON I'TIKAAF:

Narrated by Ayesha (رضي الله عنها) that,

“THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (صلى الله عليه و سلم) WOULD NOT ENTER HIS HOUSE FOR ANYTHING EXCEPT FOR A NEED WHEN HE WAS OBSERVING I'TIKAAF.”

(Bukharee 2029 & Muslim 297)

Narrated by Ayesha (رضي الله عنها) that,

“THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (صلى الله عليه و سلم) USED TO LEAN HIS HEAD TOWARDS ME WHEN HE WAS OBSERVING I'TIKAAF IN THE MOSQUE, AND I WOULD COMB HIS HAIR, WHEN I WAS MENSTRUATING.”

(Bukharee 2028 & Muslim 297)

Narrated by Ayesha (رضي الله عنها) that,

“THE SUNNAH IS FOR THE PERSON IN I'TIKAAF NOT TO VISIT THE SICK OR ATTEND FUNERALS, OR TO BE INTIMATE WITH HIS WIFE. BUT THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH HIS GOING OUT FOR ESSENTIAL NEEDS.”

(Abu Dawud 2473)

Narrated by Safiyyah (رضي الله عنها) the wife of The Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) that,

“SHE CAME TO THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (صلى الله عليه و سلم) AND VISITED HIM WHEN HE WAS IN I'TIKAAF IN THE MOSQUE, DURING THE LAST TEN DAYS OF RAMADAN. SHE SPOKE WITH HIM FOR A WHILE, AND THEN SHE STOOD UP TO LEAVE. THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SALLA-ALLAHU 'ALAYHI WA SALLAM) STOOD UP WITH HER TO TAKE HER HOME.”
(Bukharee 2035 & Muslim 2175)

WOMEN ARE ALLOWED TO HAVE I'TIKAAF

Narrated by Ayesha (رضي الله عنها) that,

“THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (صلى الله عليه و سلم) USED TO SPEND THE LAST TEN NIGHTS OF RAMADAN IN I'TIKAAF UNTIL HE PASSED AWAY, THEN HIS WIVES OBSERVED I'TIKAAF AFTER HE DIED.”
(Bukharee 2026 & Muslim 1172)

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

“AND DO NOT HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH THEM (YOUR WIVES) WHILE YOU ARE IN I'TIKAAF (I.E. CONFINING ONESELF IN A MOSQUE FOR PRAYERS AND INVOCATIONS LEAVING THE WORLDLY ACTIVITIES) IN THE MOSQUES”
(Surah Al Baqarah 2:187)

I'TIKAAF CAN BE DONE IN MOSQUE IN WHICH CONGREGATION PRAYER HELD:

Narrated by Ayesha (رضي الله عنها) that,

“THERE SHOULD BE NO I'TIKAAF EXCEPT IN A MOSQUE IN WHICH PRAYERS IN CONGREGATION ARE HELD (MASJID JAMAA'AH).”
(Al Bayhaqi)

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

“AND WE COMMANDED IBRAHIM (ABRAHAM) AND ISMAA'EEL (ISHMAEL) THAT THEY SHOULD PURIFY MY HOUSE (THE KA'BAH AT MAKKAH) FOR THOSE WHO ARE CIRCUMAMBULATING IT, OR STAYING (ITIKAAF), OR BOWING OR PROSTRATING THEMSELVES (THERE, IN PRAYER)”

(Surah Al Baqarah 2:125)

REWARD:

The Prophet Muhammad (صلی الله علیہ و سلم) said:

“THE REWARD OF ALLAH IS PRECIOUS; THE REWARD OF ALLAH IS PARADISE.”

(Tirmidhi)

BASIC GOAL FOR ITIKAAF

That the basic goal of the I'tikaaf of the Prophet (صلی الله علیہ و سلم) was to seek Laylat al-Qadr and to prepare to spend that night in worship. That is because of the great virtue of that night.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

“THE NIGHT OF AL-QADR (DECREE) IS BETTER THAN A THOUSAND MONTHS

(Surah Al Qadr 97:3)

Means: Worshipping Allah In That Night Is Better Than Worshipping Him A Thousand Months. (I.E. 83 Years And 4 Months)